

WRITTEN QUESTION E-6347/07

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to the Commission

Subject: EU information and communication strategy

In its resolutions (P5\_TA(2003)0187) of 10 April 2003 and (P6\_TA(2005)0183) of 12 May 2005, the European Parliament considered how to implement the Union's information and communication strategy, which is an essential means of establishing a more sustained dialogue between institutions and citizens and encouraging democratic participation. The Commission's 2006 White Paper on a European communication policy - which Parliament welcomed in its resolution (P6\_TA(2006)0500) of 16 November 2006 - confirmed the above approach in connection with pilot projects for the 2007-2008 period such as establishing 'European public spaces' or 'Café de l'Europe' coffeehouse discussion venues as an experiment in establishing dialogue and promoting European awareness of Community initiatives. The budgetary provisions for funding up to 2013 set out in the annex to the Communication of 3 October 2007, in particular, could be used to set up initiatives of this kind, possibly in partnership with the Member States (COM(2007) 568).

1. Could the Commission explain why the venues chosen to launch these experiments, together with the European Parliament, are mainly in Northern European countries, as in the case of Dublin and Tallinn (see letter 307432 of 27 April 2007 between Vidal Quadras, Vice-President of the EP, and Vice-President Wallström, and the Commission Communication COM(2007) 568)?

2.. Does the Commission consider that it would be possible to use the facilities of the CIDE (European Information and Documentation Centre) in Rome, which is due to be closed down at the end of this year, to launch the pilot project in Italy, thus making use of those premises and the staff due to be dismissed as of 31 December 2007, who are already trained in communications, information, research and EU documentation and offer a wealth of human and other resources which would otherwise be dispersed unnecessarily, while maintaining and developing, in preparation for the 2008 European year of intercultural dialogue, the forthcoming the Lisbon Treaty ratification process and the European elections in 2009, an existing important focus for information and intercultural dialogue to promote integration, peace, toleration and multiculturalism throughout the Mediterranean area, where Europe is developing cultural cooperation, economic and political agreements?